

# Mercati ex Machina: *Economic Prosperity and Decline in Early Modern Jewish Political Thought*

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Vasileios Syros

*Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America*

*Columbia University*

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A VIGOROUS ECONOMY, the influence of trade on politics, the importance of religious tolerance for economic success, and the deleterious repercussions of religious conflict have been issues of enduring importance in European political thought since the Renaissance. One political thinker who set the tenor for responses to these questions was Giovanni Botero (1544–1617), a Piedmontese ex-Jesuit who rose to fame for his endeavor to harmonize Niccolò Machiavelli’s (1469–1527) political teachings with the principles of the Christian faith, thus generating a new line of political thinking generally subsumed under the rubric “reason of state” (*ragion di stato*). Another key aspect of Botero’s political and economic theory, as developed in his *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities* and colored by his experience serving the Church and various Italian and Spanish rulers, concerns the principal factors that promote the greatness, magnificence, and economic glory of the state.

While previous literature has noted affinities between Botero’s ideas and early modern Jewish perceptions of political and economic greatness and decline, the main thrust of this essay is to take a fresh look at Italian Jewish discourse on the formation of the state, the components of greatness, and the causes of decline in a comparative context. Specifically, I attempt a detailed exploration of the ways in which major figures of Jewish intellectual life such as Botero’s Venetian contemporaries Leon Modena (1571–1648) and Simone Luzzatto (ca. 1580–1663) engaged with some of the themes that dominate Botero’s thinking. Modena and Luzzatto do not provide any references to Botero’s writings, but it is very possible that they had access to the latter’s main

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political works, all of which circulated widely in Venice and other Italian cities, and that they were familiar with contemporary debates on the reason-of-state tradition. However, my focus is not on tracing the reception of Botero's political and economic doctrines in Modena's and Luzzatto's writings. Rather, the primary objective of this article is to explore and analyze affinities and commonalities in their respective arguments about commerce and the state and, more broadly, to look at how certain ideas and themes derived from the genre of reason-of-state writings were received and applied in Jewish interpretations of the history of ancient Israel and Rome and discussions on the role of the Jewish trade community in the economic life of the Serenissima.<sup>1</sup>

Modena identifies a sizable population, military power, and accumulation of precious metals as the prime characteristics of a great polity and ascribes the downfall of ancient Israel to its failure to abide by the divine commandments. Luzzatto, on the other hand, subtly changes the meaning of Jewish exile and effects a radical rupture with earlier interpretations of Jewish decline and with Modena by assigning primacy to trade and not military prowess, conquest, or territorial expansion as the driving force of economic development. Luzzatto's theory reveals a deep engagement with early modern discussions on economic decadence (Jean Bodin, Luis Ortiz, Martín González de Cellorigo) and on the importance of money for a healthy body politic (Bernardo Davanzati). At the same time, Luzzatto departs from previous approaches to Jewish decline and exile (*galut*) in three crucial respects: he highlights the advantages associated with exile, seeks to reinstate the Jews as active actors in world history, politics, and economics, and de-emphasizes the role of God and/or fortune in human history.

Building on the findings of the historical analysis and comparison of Botero's, Modena's, and Luzzatto's conceptions of state greatness and decline, in the final section of the article I present a first attempt to investigate how the deployment of Michel Foucault's (1926–84) concept of governmentality can facilitate a fuller understanding of early modern Jewish political thought. In particular, I argue that Modena's and Luzzatto's writings display specific points of intersection with reason-of-state literature produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

<sup>1</sup> On early modern Jewish attitudes to Machiavelli and the reason-of-state tradition, see Abraham Melamed, "Machiavellism and Anti-Machiavellism in 17th Century Jewish Amsterdam: From 'Ragione di Stato' to 'Razon de Estado,'" in "Tora und politische Macht / Torah and Political Power," special issue, *Trumah* 19 (2010): 1–19; reprinted in Abraham Melamed, *Wisdom's Little Sister: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 355–70. On the evolution of the reason-of-state tradition, see, e.g., Artemio Enzo Baldini, "Il dibattito politico nell'Italia nella Controriforma: Ragion di stato, tacitismo, machiavellismo, utopia," *Il pensiero politico* 30 (1997): 393–439; Artemio Enzo Baldini, "L'antimachiavélisme en Italie au début de la littérature de la raison d'état," in "L'antimachiavélisme, de la Renaissance aux Lumières," ed. Alain Dierkens, special issue, *Problèmes d'histoire des religions* 8 (1997): 15–30; *Ragion di stato e ragioni dello stato (secoli XV–XVII)*, ed. Pierangelo Schiera (Naples: L'Officina Tipografica, 1996); Yves Charles Zarka, ed., *Raison et déraison d'état: Théoriciens et théories de la raison d'état aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994); Gianfranco Borrelli, *Ragion di stato e Leviatano: Conservazione e scambio alle origini della modernità politica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993); Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 238–80; Michael Stolleis, *Staat und Staatsräson in der frühen Neuzeit: Studien zur Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1990); Rodolfo De Mattei, *Il problema della "Ragion di stato" nell'età della Controriforma* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1979); Rodolfo De Mattei, *Dal premachiavellismo all'antimachiavellismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1969); William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (1968; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 444–49; Heinrich Lutz, *Ragione di stato und christliche Staatsethik im 16. Jahrhundert*, 2nd ed. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1961); and Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1924), translated into English by Douglas Scott as *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957).

and reflect critical moments in the evolution of modern governmentality and the emergence of political economy, as delineated by Foucault. I show that their ideas about the role of the population in the organization of a vigorous polity and their usage of exempla from Jewish history point to the transition from the notion of “people” to that of “population.” As with the mercantilist tradition, one of Luzzatto’s guiding preoccupations is to illustrate the correlation between wealth and population and, more broadly, to determine the nature and function of the various elements and segments of the state envisioned as an institutional whole. Luzzatto’s advocacy of governmental measures intended to reinvigorate the Venetian economy and his elaborate use of statistical information can be related to the reason-of-state authors’ thesis that good government requires a comprehensive knowledge of the component parts of the state as well as of the factors conducive to the state’s conservation in the face of emergencies or other threats to its prosperity, strength, and/or growth. Luzzatto embraces the idea that a key aspect of effective rulership is the immunization of the state against the influence of decadence and decline that inevitably follow its successful rise. A corollary of this idea is Luzzatto’s emphasis on the ruler’s need to ensure and supervise the circulation and flow of commodities, which leads to his analogy of the Jews as the blood in the body politic.

## GIOVANNI BOTERO ON GREATNESS

### *Population*

In his *Della ragion di stato* (*On the Reason of State*, 1589), Botero argues that a large population is a source of wealth and revenue for the public treasury. It also necessitates intensive cultivation of the land, which in turn provides the supplies that are necessary for the sustenance of the population and the raw materials for the various crafts. Botero invokes the examples of Italy and France, which have no gold or silver mines but, nevertheless, possess a greater amount of precious metals than any other European country, thanks to two factors: the density of their population, and the efflorescence of trade, which have attracted wealth from all over the world. In contrast, Botero considers Spain to be a desolate country due to the sparseness of its population rather than deficiencies in the nature or quality of the land or air. The land is perfectly suitable for the production of food supplies that are necessary for civil life, but a large part of it remains uncultivated and the countryside is laid waste. Furthermore, its inhabitants are by nature more inclined to engage in warfare than in agricultural activities or the exercise of the manual crafts, and the country is lacking in crafts and raw materials.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Luigi Firpo, ed., *Della ragion di stato di Giovanni Botero con tre libri Delle cause della grandezza delle città, due Aggiunte e un Discorso sulla popolazione di Roma* (Turin: UTET, 1948), 239–41 (hereafter cited as *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*); Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State and The Greatness of Cities*, trans. Pamela J. Waley, Daniel P. Waley, and Robert Peterson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956) (hereafter cited as *Reason of State and Greatness of Cities*), VII.12 (145–46). I have also consulted the recent English translation in Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, ed. Robert Bireley (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Botero discusses these themes also in his work *Relationi universali* (*Universal Relations*, 1591–96), a comprehensive account of the societal organization, political arrangements, cultures, and religious practices of various states around the world framed according to the main principles of his political theory. Consider Giovanni Botero, *Le relazioni universali*, ed. Blythe Alice Raviola (Turin: Nino Aragno, 2015), 2:571–80; early modern English translation by Robert Johnson: *Relations, of the Most Famous Kingdoms and Common-weales thorough the World Discoursing of their Scituations, Manners, Customes, Strengthes and Pollicies* (London: Iohn Iaggard, 1608), 1–9. The secondary literature on Botero’s political and economic ideas is extensive. See, e.g., Justus Nipperdey, *Die Erfindung der Bevölkerungspolitik: Staat, politische Theorie und Population in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2012), 65–102; Romain Descendre,

In addition, a sizable, vigorous, and resourceful population enables a ruler to undertake military operations, whereas a small population may easily be decimated when faced with a calamity. Botero invokes the example of the Romans, who, thanks to their valor and, more importantly, their unlimited supply of men, conducted wars in many places at great distances from each other simultaneously and therefore subjugated the whole world. Thanks to numerical superiority, they defeated Carthage, and the size of their army was swiftly restored after military disasters or defeats.<sup>3</sup>

### Trade

Botero expounds on the mechanisms of growth in his *Delle cause della grandezza e magnificenza delle città* (*On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, 1588), in which he defines the city as the assemblage of persons who band together in order to achieve prosperity. Accordingly, its greatness and magnificence consist, not in the extent of its site or the circumference of its walls, but in the size, quality, and strength of its population. Men are gathered together through authority, force, pleasure, or the utility that emanates from living in a community.<sup>4</sup> Authority cannot endure if it does not offer convenience, nor can it alone cause communities to grow and expand over a long period of time. Force cannot lead to lasting results, and states and dominions acquired through mere force and violence are not long-lasting. Pleasure and delight are less important factors, because humans are born to work; therefore, most men attend to their business, and while the idle are sustained by the work and diligence of those who work, their number is limited. Botero concludes that utility is the greatest guarantor and enhancer of urban greatness and growth, and it manifests itself in various forms.<sup>5</sup>

The greatness and magnificence of cities hinge on three intertwined elements: advantageous location, fertile land, and easy communication and transportation.<sup>6</sup> A site can be characterized as advantageous when it is located at the crossroads of trade routes, is needed by many peoples for trade and commerce, and is a locus for trade activities. A great city operates as an intermediary in trade and profits from both exports and imports. Botero mentions Venice and Genoa as prime examples of such cities that serve not only as transit stations but also, and more importantly, as

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*L'état du monde: Giovanni Botero entre raison d'état et géopolitique* (Geneva: Droz, 2009); Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Oriental Despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005): 109–80; John M. Headley, "Geography and Empire in the Late Renaissance: Botero's Assignment, Western Universalism, and the Civilizing Process," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000): 1119–55; Artemio Enzo Baldini, ed., *Aristotelismo politico e ragion di stato* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1995); Gianfranco Borrelli, ed., *Prudenza civile, bene comune, guerra giusta: Percorsi della ragion di stato tra Seicento e Settecento* (Naples: Archivio della Ragion di Stato, 1999); Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*; Artemio Enzo Baldini, ed., *Botero e la "Ragion di stato"* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1992); and Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 45–71.

<sup>3</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 238; *Reason of State and Greatness of Cities*, VII.11–12 (143–44). On the political implications of population growth in early modern political thought, see Nipperdey, *Die Erfindung der Bevölkerungspolitik* (on Botero in particular, see 65–102).

<sup>4</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 345; Giovanni Botero, *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, trans. and intro. Geoffrey Symcox (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), I.1 (9) (hereafter cited as *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*).

<sup>5</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 352–53; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, I.7 (16–17).

<sup>6</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 353; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, I.7 (17).

warehouses and storehouses, as is also the case with Lisbon and Antwerp.<sup>7</sup> The fertility of the soil determines and translates into the ability of the city to not only provide the basic needs of its own inhabitants but also, and more crucially, to aid neighboring cities. Every land cannot produce everything, but the more resources a territory has, the more self-sufficient its cities will be. Self-sufficiency is conducive to greatness, because a self-sufficient city will be less dependent on others and better able to retain its population and to lure, recruit, and maintain a skilled workforce from neighboring regions.<sup>8</sup> Finally, ease of transport brings together and unites people in one place.<sup>9</sup>

The most critical factor at work in the economic development, prosperity, and demographic expansion of a state is, according to Botero, the diligence of its inhabitants and a multiplicity of crafts, some of which are vital and indispensable, some beneficial to civil life, some desirable for display and decoration, and some intended for the pleasure and entertainment of individuals who have leisure. The existence of diverse crafts generates a flow of wealth and people—people who process, deliver, and trade finished products, who provide the workers with materials, or who purchase, transport, and sell manufactures from one place to another.<sup>10</sup> The ancient Romans sought to stimulate and enhance population growth and the circulation of goods by granting sanctuary and citizenship;<sup>11</sup> extending citizenship and magistracies to the *municipia* (free towns);<sup>12</sup> creating an aura of magnificence, opulence, and majesty by sponsoring the construction of sumptuous and luxurious edifices, such as memorials of great generals;<sup>13</sup> and establishing colonies.<sup>14</sup> Other practices and methods employed by the Romans and other nations were intended to cultivate religion and the worship of God;<sup>15</sup> create centers of learning (universities, etc.);<sup>16</sup> set up courts of justice, senates, parliaments, and other kinds of administrative, executive, and judicial bodies;<sup>17</sup> promote industry and a great number of crafts and professions;<sup>18</sup> offer fiscal benefits;<sup>19</sup> guarantee

<sup>7</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 353–54; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, I.8 (17–18).

<sup>8</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 354–55; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, I.9 (18–19).

<sup>9</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 356–63; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, I.10 (20–27).

<sup>10</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 246–47; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.7 (42–43).

<sup>11</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 365; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.2 (31–32).

<sup>12</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 366; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.2 (32–33).

<sup>13</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 366–67; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.2 (33).

<sup>14</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 367–68; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.3 (33–35).

<sup>15</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 369–72; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.4 (35–38).

<sup>16</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 372–74; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.5 (39–41).

<sup>17</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 374–76; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.6 (41–42).

<sup>18</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 246–50; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.7 (42–46).

<sup>19</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 376–77; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.8 (46–47).



the possession of valuable commodities<sup>20</sup> and political power and authority;<sup>21</sup> and ensure that a city serves as the seat of power and residence of the nobility<sup>22</sup> and of the rulers.<sup>23</sup>

To facilitate commercial endeavors, a city needs to offer fiscal privileges, as did Naples, which grew its population and buildings considerably by granting tax exemptions and franchises to its inhabitants. Similarly, the cities of Flanders were the most mercantile and frequented in all Europe, partly because they guaranteed freedom from (indirect) taxation and because the import duties and tariffs they levied on incoming and outgoing merchandise were minimal.<sup>24</sup> Cities and regions that have a monopoly on valuable resources or that are the only region able to produce or manufacture a particular commodity or that can produce the greatest quantity or highest quality of any particular commodity have an additional advantage in attracting human capital.<sup>25</sup>

### LEON MODENA ON GREATNESS

The development of trade and the flourishing of economic thought in Italy, in particular Venice, gave a powerful impetus to Jewish thinking about the growth and decay of the state, as evidenced by the *Midbar Yehudah* (*The Desert of Judah / The Judaeon Desert*), a series of sermons delivered by Leon Modena, a prominent Jewish scholar and rabbi in Venice. The sermons were given in Italian and published in Hebrew in Venice in 1602,<sup>26</sup> a few years after the publication of Botero's *Della ragion di stato* and *Delle cause della grandezza e magnificenza delle città*. Modena's works include his autobiography *Haye Yehudah* (*Life of Judah*),<sup>27</sup> the *Magen ya-herav* (*Shield and Sword*),<sup>28</sup> and the *Historia de' riti hebraici* (*History of the Rites of the Jews*), a systematic exposition of the cardinal principles, doctrines, and rites of the Jewish religion aimed at a broader, Christian readership.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 377–80; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.9 (47–50).

<sup>21</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 381–82; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.10 (50–51).

<sup>22</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 382–83; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.11 (51–53).

<sup>23</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 383–98; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.12 (53–68).

<sup>24</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 376–77; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.8 (46–47).

<sup>25</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 377–80; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, II.9 (47–50).

<sup>26</sup> For Modena's sermons, see Joanna Weinberg, "Preaching in the Venetian Ghetto: The Sermons of Leon Modena," in *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto*, ed. David B. Ruderman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 105–28; and Ellis Rivkin, "The Sermons of Leon of Modena," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23 (1950/51): 295–317. On Modena's life and works, see, in general, Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); David Malkiel, ed., *The Lion Shall Roar: Leon Modena and His World* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2003); Talya Fishman, *Shaking the Pillars of Exile: 'Voice of a Fool,' an Early Modern Jewish Critique of Rabbinic Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Howard E. Adelman, "Success and Failure in the Seventeenth Century Ghetto of Venice: The Life and Thought of Leon Modena, 1571–1648 (Italy)" (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1985).

<sup>27</sup> Mark R. Cohen, trans. and ed., *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); translated into Italian by Emanuele M. Artom as *Vita di Jehudà: Autobiografia di Leon Modena, rabbino veneziano del XVII secolo* (Turin: S. Zamorani, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Léon de Modène, *Le bouclier et la targe: Une polémique sur l'identité juive au XVIIe siècle*, trans. Jean-Pierre Osier (Paris: Centre d'études Don Isaac Abravanel, 1980).

<sup>29</sup> Leon(e) Modena, *Historia de' riti hebraici* (Venice: B. Miloco, 1678; repr., Bologna: A. Forni, 1979). See also Arthur A. Chiel, "Leone da Modena's *Riti ebraici*," *Judaism* 28 (1979): 194–201; and Mark R. Cohen, "Leone da Modena's

Echoing Botero's ideas on the constituents of greatness, in the *Midbar Yehudah* Modena asserts that the condition, goodness, and prowess of a particular nation can be measured according to the following criteria: the size, greatness, quality, wisdom, and valor of its population; the presence of men of great stature; and the physical location, including the quality and salubrity of the air, the existence of vineyards, and access to rivers and natural resources. In ancient times, the Roman Empire (*malkhut ha-romiit*) epitomized the valor and felicity of all kingdoms and endeavored to meet these three criteria. In order to augment the population, the Romans did not allow anyone without children to participate in the Senate. At some point, they raised and were able to maintain a large, properly equipped, and well-trained standing army that was divided into twenty-two military camps, with each camp consisting of 200,000 foot soldiers, 100,000 horsemen, and 300 elephants, in addition to the various craftsmen and the people who served as auxiliary forces. And in order to motivate the people to strive for perfection in the sciences, arts, and valor (*[ba'al] giborah* = warriors), they constructed altars and temples for those who had achieved excellence in their respective fields and professions, designated them gods, and placed faith in them. In addition, they built numerous markets, bridges, and bathhouses and amassed abundant supplies of silver and gold.<sup>30</sup>

The Jews also enjoyed God's blessing in these things when they were following God's will: their population grew, whereas now it is shrinking; since they are few in number, they stand out, meaning that five Jews together make a stronger impression than ten persons from another nation. The wisdom and understanding of a nation are mirrored in the laws they follow, and when the Jews abided by the Torah, King Solomon was the wisest of all men (*ben David hakham mi kol adam*), and some of his wisdom was transferred to them and remained with them for many generations. In every place a person from Jerusalem visited, a podium would be offered so that the inhabitants might hear and partake of his wisdom. There are accounts of deeds of wisdom that individuals from Jerusalem performed with the wise men of Athens, the birthplace of human wisdom (the wellspring from which emerged the sciences, *mekor hokhmot enoshiot*). The ancient Jews enjoyed material prosperity: Judaea produced five times more grain than what it should have under normal circumstances, and the land of Israel produced abundant supplies of linen and oil. The air of the land of Israel made people wise, unlike Egypt, where the spirit of impurity dwelled. That was the situation until the destruction of the Second Temple. When Jeremiah became angry at the people of Israel, he showed that there were among them learned persons who excelled in the natural and divine sciences but that the people of Israel did not want to use their sciences because they wanted to avoid acknowledging their sins. They stopped cultivating the divine sciences and were left with only the natural sciences and the investigation of natural phenomena. And now their sins have increased, and because some of them have abandoned the Torah, the Jews lack knowledge even in the natural sciences.<sup>31</sup>

## SIMONE LUZZATTO ON THE FORMATION OF THE STATE

The nexus of efficient government and economic health and prosperity is one of the dominant themes of the economic and political thought of Simone Luzzatto, Modena's contemporary and

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*Riti*: A Seventeenth-Century Plea for Social Toleration of Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 34 (1972): 287–321.

<sup>30</sup> Yehuda Aryeh mi-Modina, *Leḳeṭ ketavim*, ed. Pnina Nave (Jerusalem: Bialik Foundation, 1968), 121. On the following, see also the discussion in Abraham Melamed, "The Perception of Jewish History in Italian Jewish Thought of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Reexamination," *Italia Judaica* 2 (1986): 139–70, esp. 158–59.

<sup>31</sup> Yehuda Aryeh mi-Modina, *Leḳeṭ ketavim*, 121–22.

also a rabbi in Venice. Luzzatto's *Discorso circa il stato de gl'Hebrei et in particular dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venetia* (*Discourse Concerning the Condition of the Jews, and in Particular Those Residing in the Illustrious City of Venice*)<sup>32</sup> appeared in 1638, in the aftermath of allegations about Jewish involvement in the bribery of the Venetian judiciary, and was addressed to the Venetian authorities.<sup>33</sup> In 1651 Luzzatto published the *Socrate overo dell'humano sapere* (*Socrates or about Human*

<sup>32</sup> Giuseppe Veltri, ed., *Simone Luzzatto: Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico nella Venezia del Seicento* (Milan: Bompiani, 2013) (hereafter cited as *Simone Luzzatto: Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*), 3–106; and Simone Luzzatto, *Discorso circa il stato de gl'Hebrei et in particular dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venetia* (Venice: G. Calleoni, 1638; facsimile repr., Bologna: A. Forni, 1976) (hereafter cited as *Discorso*). An English translation of the treatise (with the exception of Considerations XV and XVI), which I consulted in the process of writing this article, is included in Lester W. Roubey, "The *Discorso circa il stato degli Hebrei* (1638) of the Italian Rabbi Simeone (Simha ben Isaac) Luzzatto with an Introduction on the Life and Works of the Author" (rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, 1947), 1–117. Portions of Considerations I, II, IV, VIII, XI, and XVI have been translated in *Italy in the Baroque: Selected Readings*, ed. and trans. Brendan Dooley (New York: Garland, 1995), 386–98. For an English translation of Considerations XI and XII, see Felix Giovanelli, "The Situation of the Hebrews: A Jewish Apologist of 17th-Century Venice; Simone Luzzatto," *Commentary* 4 (1947): 371–77. For Consideration XVI, see idem, "Learning Among the Hebrews: A 17th-Century Report; Simone ben Isaac Luzzatto," *Commentary* 13 (1952): 589–93. For Considerations XVII and XVIII, see idem, "The Hebrews among the Nations: A 17th-Century Venetian Jew Explains His People; Simone Luzzatto," *Commentary* 3 (1947): 474–78. I have also consulted the summary and discussion of Considerations I–X in Benjamin C. I. Ravid, *Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth Century Venice: The Background and Context of the "Discorso" of Simone Luzzatto* (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1978), 49–93. For further information about Luzzatto's life and works, see Giuseppe Veltri, ed., *Filosofo e Rabbinista nella Venezia del Seicento: Studi su Simone Luzzatto con documenti inediti dall'Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (Rome: Aracne, 2015); and Giuseppe Veltri, Gianfranco Miletto, and Guido Bartolucci, "The Last Will and Testament of Simone Luzzatto (1583?–1663) and the Only Known Manuscript of the *Discorso* (1638): Newly Discovered Manuscripts from the State Archive of Venice and the Marciana Library, Venice," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 5 (2011): 125–46.

<sup>33</sup> *Simone Luzzatto: Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 6–7, 43–44, 49–50; *Discorso*, fols. 5v–6r, 38v–39r, 44r–v. For the circumstances surrounding the composition of the *Discorso* and the situation of Venice's Jewish community, see particularly the following studies by Benjamin C. I. Ravid: "On Sufferance and Not as of Right: The Status of the Jewish Communities in Early Modern Venice," in Malkiel, *The Lion Shall Roar*, 17–61; "The Venetian Government and the Jews," in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, ed. Robert C. Davis and Benjamin C. I. Ravid (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 3–30; and Ravid, *Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth Century Venice*, 7–18. See also David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2–4, 108–9; Cristiana Facchini, "Voci ebraiche sulla tolleranza religiosa: Pratiche e teorie nella Venezia barocca," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 30 (2013): 393–419, esp. 407–16; Cristiana Facchini, "The City, the Ghetto and Two Books: Venice and Jewish Early Modernity," in "Modernity and the Cities of the Jews," ed. Cristiana Facchini, special issue, *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 2 (2011): 11–44, <http://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=266>; and Caetano Cozzi, *Giustizia "contaminata": Vicende giudiziarie di nobili ed ebrei nella Venezia del Seicento* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996). Luzzatto's views on Venetian political organization are examined in Abraham Melamed, "The Myth of Venice in Italian Renaissance Jewish Thought," *Italia Judaica* 1 (1983) [= *Proceedings of the First International Italia-Judaica Conference, Bari, 1981*]: 409–13, reprinted in Melamed, *Wisdom's Little Sister*, 238–43; and Giuseppe Veltri, "La Venise de Simone Luzzatto," trans. from the Italian by Valérie Merle, *Les cahiers du Judaïsme* 22 (2007): 96–102. On Luzzatto's political theory and its ties to the reason-of-state tradition, see, e.g., Giuseppe Veltri, *Renaissance Philosophy in Jewish Garb: Foundations and Challenges in Judaism on the Eve of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 195–225; Benjamin Ravid, "Biblical Exegesis à la Mercantilism and Raison d'État in Seventeenth Century Venice: The *Discorso* of Simone Luzzatto," in *Bringing the Hidden to Light: The Process of Interpretation*, ed. Kathryn F. Kravitz and Diane M. Sharon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 169–86; Vasileios Syros, "Ahitophel's Advice and the 'Reason of State': Simone Luzzatto (1583–1663) on Absalom's Revolt," *Lias* 34 (2007): 45–57; Vasileios Syros, "Simone Luzzatto's Image of the Ideal Prince and the Italian Tradition of Reason of State," *Redescriptions* 9 (2005): 157–82; Abraham Melamed, *The Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 167–74; and Abraham Melamed, "Simone Luzzatto on Tacitus: Apologetica and Ragione di Stato," in *Studies in*



*Knowledge*), a dialogue among various ancient Greek philosophical figures on a variety of topics related to human knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

For Luzzatto, the people resemble a large quantity of amorphous marble that can be stored or shaped and used by the sovereign to provide for his needs. In line with Botero and Modena, Luzzatto suggests that a large and vigorous population is a source of grandeur and magnificence for the prince. Luzzatto quotes Proverbs (14:28) to the effect that a ruler's glory consists and is mirrored or manifested in the multitude of the people, whereas a dwindling population ineluctably leads to political decline. He also invokes the comments of the medieval Jewish philosopher and biblical commentator Gersonides (Levi ben Gershon, 1288–1344), that greatness and royal majesty emanate from a large population, whereas fear of penury and scarcity are generated from a small population. Luzzatto refutes the commonly held belief that the existence of a sizable population causes shortages in material resources and poverty. He stresses instead that the collection of a large number of people is conducive to the expansion of trade activities and increase in profits, which in turn serve as incentives for others to transport foodstuffs and supplies that are necessary for human sustenance.<sup>35</sup>

Luzzatto also suggests that states are akin to the Milky Way: each individual star is invisible to the human eye, but when many small stars are joined together, they form a great source of light and splendor. In the same way, large and powerful empires result from the conglomeration or coalition of small political entities or peoples. The sea, when it is swollen with water, does not receive the rivers that flow into it, but both are equally increased. But when the sea is in a diminished condition, the larger rivers flowing into it have their own waters diminished while the smaller rivers dry up. Similarly, the stomach reacts when it suffers a lack of food and causes pain to the other parts and organs of the living organism and nourishes itself from humors appropriate to it. But if there is an abundance of nutrition, the pain is alleviated and the food circulates throughout the whole body. In a similar fashion, the multiplicity of tolls and carriage fees not only relieves the people from the burden of taxes, which the ruler has to levy in order to satisfy his needs and address emergency situations, but also contributes to the public treasury.<sup>36</sup>

Civil experience, according to Luzzatto, shows that in cities that flourish due to thriving trade, their populations are relieved of extraordinary burdens and excessive taxes. The Romans, albeit so “political” and moderate, even imposed a special tax (*tansa del Grisargiro*) on human and animal excrement. The public treasury was also enriched by such ignominious and obscene activities as prostitution, in addition to the capital tax (*tansa capitale*) that was exacted from the lowest strata of the population.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, one of the prime tasks of an effective and sagacious ruler is to ensure that the wealth of the state is divided and allocated in a just geometrical proportion, in accordance with the principles and rules of distributive justice and in such a manner that while a small portion of the populace receives and has control over the greater part of the profits, the others do not

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*Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2:143–70, reprinted in Melamed, *Wisdom's Little Sister*, 305–34.

<sup>34</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 107–400; Simone Luzzatto, *Socrate, ovvero dell'humano sapere* (Venice: Tomasini, 1651). About the *Socrate*, see Ariel Viterbo, “Socrate nel ghetto: Lo scetticismo mascherato di Simone Luzzatto,” *Studi veneziani*, n.s., 38 (1999): 79–128; and David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 153–84.

<sup>35</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 30–31, 410; *Discorso*, fols. 27v–28r.

<sup>36</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 8; *Discorso*, fol. 7r–v.

<sup>37</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 8–9; *Discorso*, fols. 7v–8r.

remain exhausted and destitute. For economic inequality and the uneven distribution of wealth can cause deformity in the body politic, are anathema to a stable and lasting civil order, and generate tumult and sedition. The Republic of Venice sought to address inequalities in certain professions by limiting the number of bread bakers, wool workers, and silk workers. The agrarian laws in ancient Rome, on the other hand, did not heal or soothe but caused more tensions and divisions, since it is possible to halt the fortunate course of adventurers only in an imperceptible manner. Provisions and policies that can be construed as acts of violent extortion and invidious malice stifle human industry and the fervent and insatiable desire of human beings to constantly expand their fortunes. They instead force them to deviate and revert from the progress they have made.<sup>38</sup>

### LUZZATTO AND BOTERO ON ECONOMIC DECLINE

Building on various strands of early modern economic and political thinking, particularly the reason-of-state tradition, Luzzatto's *Discorso* highlights the importance of trade for a prosperous society and can be read as a mercantilist apologia for the contribution of the Jews to the Venetian economy and as a response to the debates triggered by the influx of gold and silver from the mines of New Spain and Peru from the mid-sixteenth century onward and the ensuing inflation and economic decline in Spain and the rest of Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Jean Bodin (1530–96) was one of the first European political theorists to identify the abundant supply of gold and silver as one of the principal causes of the increase in the amount of currency in circulation and the concomitant rise in commodity prices.<sup>40</sup> The extent to which a successful economy depends on the supply of precious metals occupied a number of Spanish political and economic theorists, who offered critiques and proposed drastic fiscal reforms and came to be known as *arbitristas*.<sup>41</sup> The accountant Luis Ortiz, contemplating the root causes of

<sup>38</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 28–29; *Discorso*, fols. 25r–26r.

<sup>39</sup> For further discussion on the effects of the inflow of metals from the New World on the European economies and monetary arrangements, see Steven Topic, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr L. Frank, eds., *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500–1600* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); the various articles by Dennis O. Flynn that have been reprinted in his *World Silver and Monetary History in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1996); Artur Attman, *American Bullion in the European World Trade, 1600–1800* (Göteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets-Samhället, 1986); and Earl J. Hamilton, *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain, 1501–1650* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1965). See also, in general, John F. Richards, ed., *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1983); and Trevor Henry Aston, ed., *Crisis in Europe, 1560–1660* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965).

<sup>40</sup> *La Response de Maistre Jean Bodin Advocat en la Cour au paradoxe de Monsieur de Malestroit, touchant l'encherissement de toutes choses, & le moyen d'y remedier* (Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1568); and Henri Hauser, *La vie chère au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: La response de Jean Bodin à M. de Malestroit, 1568* (Paris: A. Colin, 1932). Bodin published a revised edition of the treatise ten years later, in which he incorporated portions from his *Les six livres de la République* (*The Six Books of the Commonwealth*, 1576): *Discours de Jean Bodin sur le rehaussement et diminution des monnoyes, tant d'or que d'argent, & le moyen d'y rémedier: & réponse aux Paradoxes de Monsieur de Malestroit* (Paris: Jacques du Puys, 1578). See also Jean Bodin, *Response to the Paradoxes of Malestroit*, trans. and ed. Henry Tudor and Robert W. Dyson (Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Press, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> For further discussion, see Elvira Vilches, *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); John H. Elliott, *Spain, Europe, and the Wider World, 1500–1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Juan I. Gutiérrez Nieto, “El pensamiento económico, político y social de los arbitristas,” in *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal*, vol. 26 (1), *El siglo del Quijote (1580–1680): Religión, filosofía, ciencia*, ed. Jover Zamora (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1986), 235–354; Michel Cavillac, *Gueux et marchands dans le Guzmán de Alfarache (1599–1604): Roman picaresque et mentalité bourgeoise dans l'Espagne du Siècle d'Or* (Bordeaux: Institut d'Études Ibériques et Ibéro-américaines de

the financial crisis that gripped the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century, addressed a memorandum to King Philip II of Spain (1527–98, r. 1556–98) in 1558, in which he points to the risks associated with overreliance on the natural, gold, and silver resources from the New World. Ortiz's tract bears the title *Memorial para que no salgan dineros de estos reinos de España* (*Memorandum so that Monies Do Not Leave from These Realms of Spain*) and advocates a set of measures designed to redress trade imbalances between the export of raw materials from the New World and the import of manufactured products and to revitalize Spain's economy through the creation of employment opportunities, the suppression of idleness, demographic growth, and consistent support for agriculture.<sup>42</sup>

Ortiz's insights were reinforced by Martín González de Cellorigo, whose *Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración a la República de España y estados de ella* (*Memorandum on the Necessary Policy and Useful Restoration of the Spanish State and Its Dominions*, 1600) represents a sustained endeavor to trace the origins of the social maladies and economic recession that beset Spain at the turn of the sixteenth century, notably: demographic stagnation; slackness and parasitism; overdependence on precious metals emanating from the New World; profligacy and ostentation; the neglect of agriculture and the various crafts; and the growing inequality between rich and poor and the disappearance of the middle class.<sup>43</sup>

The association between the existence of a stable monetary order and the proper functioning of a healthy body politic constitutes a salient theme in Italian economic literature, especially Gasparo Scaruffi's (1519–84) *Discorso sopra le monete e della vera proporzione tra l'oro e l'argento* (*Discourse upon Coins and the True Proportion between the Gold and the Silver*, 1582)<sup>44</sup> and the *Lezione delle monete e notizia de' cambi* (*Discourse upon Coins and Information on Exchange*, 1588), a treatise on the nature, origin, and functions of money, written by Bernardo Davanzati (1529–1605), a Florentine merchant, banker, and translator of Tacitus's (AD 56–ca. 120) *Annales* (*Annals*) into Italian (1596). The *Lezione* was translated into English by John Toland (1670–1722) and seeks to pinpoint the causes and consequences of the debasement of currency and to analyze and prescribe remedies. Davanzati specifically advocates the need to set a high value for currency and protect it against such mischiefs as counterfeiting, monopolizing, simony, and usury: currency is like blood; blood is the juice and substance of flesh in the natural body; it circulates out of the

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l'Université de Bordeaux, 1983); Evaristo Correa Calderón, *Registro de arbitristas, economistas y reformadores españoles (1500–1936): Catálogo de impresos y manuscritos* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981); John H. Elliott, "Self-Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain," *Past and Present* 74 (1977): 41–61; and José Luis Sureda Carrión, *La Hacienda castellana y los economistas del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Instituto de Economía "Sancho de Moncada," 1949).

<sup>42</sup> *Memorial del Contador Luis Ortiz a Felipe II. Valladolid, 1 de marzo 1558. Biblioteca Nacional—Ms. 6.487* (Madrid: Instituto de España, 1970); and Manuel Fernández Álvarez, "El memorial de Luis de Ortiz," *Anales de economía* 17 (1957): 101–200.

<sup>43</sup> Martín González de Cellorigo, *Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración a la República de España y estados de ella y del desempeño universal de estos reinos* (1600), ed. José Luis Pérez de Ayala (Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1991). A partial English translation is included in Martín González de Cellorigo, "The Restoration of the Republic (1600)," in *Early Modern Spain: A Documentary History*, ed. Jon Cowans (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 133–40. For further discussion, see José Luis Pérez de Ayala, "Un teórico español de la política financiera: D. Martín González de Cellorigo," *Revista de derecho financiero y hacienda pública* 36 (1959): 711–47.

<sup>44</sup> Gasparo Scaruffi, *Discorso sopra le monete e della vera proporzione tra l'oro e l'argento*, in *Scrittori classici Italiani di economia politica* (Milan: G. G. Destefanis, 1804), 2:77–264; reprinted as *Breve istruzione sopra "Il discorso delle monete"* (Rome: Bizzarri, 1965).

greater into the lesser vessels, moistening, nourishing, and restoring flesh that was dried up and evaporated by natural heat. Similarly, money is the best juice and substance of the earth; it constantly circulates from the richer purses into the poorer and vice versa, and it nourishes and preserves the entire body politic. Therefore, every state must possess a sufficient amount of money and provide for its equitable circulation, just as every living organism needs a certain amount of blood for its sustenance. And just as when blood stops in the head or the larger vessels, the physical organism suffers from various diseases such as consumption, dropsy, or apoplexy, so too when money and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a small group of persons (e.g., the rich), the state suffers from disorders and distempers.<sup>45</sup>

Luzzatto suggests that, as is the case with all other things in the world, the life span of peoples and nations is fixed. After having reached the apex of their growth and grace, they descend into the abyss of oblivion. Decline occurs in two ways: things may be susceptible to corruption and eventually mutate into something else; or they retain their own essence, and changes affect only their shape, which can be deformed by dissolution. The Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all other gentile nations were wiped out, effaced, or transformed so radically that in some cases only their names have survived. In other cases only relics of their memories have been preserved, like planks left behind by a shipwreck. The Hebrew nation (i.e., the Jews), however, was not subjected to such transmutations or alterations. Although it was fragmented and divided into an infinite number of groups and was dispersed across the world, its essence (literally, the identity of its essentiality) remained in large measure intact. Given that by itself it would not have had enough strength to resist the influence of time and protect itself from the vicious blows that occurred over 1,600 years, its survival is a manifestation of the divine will. Captivity and dispersion are the worst scourges that can afflict a people or a nation, rendering it vile and abject and the object of the scorn and derision of other nations. However, such conditions can be a very effective means of preserving a nation, as they remove jealousy and suspicion from the rulers and pride and boastfulness from the nation that is subjected to dispersion, making it humble and pliant.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Bernardo Davanzati, *Lezione delle monete e notizia de' cambj* (Turin: Fògola, 1988), 51–53; “A Discourse upon Coins by Signor Bernardo Davanzati, a Gentleman of Florence; Being publicly spoken in the Academy there, Anno 1588; translated out of Italian by John Toland” (London: Awnsham and John Churchil, 1696) in *The History of Gold and Silver*, ed. Lawrence H. White (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000), 1:59–78, esp. 73–74. Scholarly treatments of Davanzati’s economic theory include Francesco Boldizzoni, “L’anatomia politica di Bernardo Davanzati: Prospettive sul pensiero economico del Rinascimento,” *Cheiron* 42 (2004): 73–93. Consider, in general, Terence Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy, 1662–1776* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1988), 14–24, 420–21. For a brief comparison of Luzzatto’s and Davanzati’s economic ideas, see Riccardo Bachi, *Israele disperso e ricostruito: Pagine di storia e di economia* (Rome: La Rassegna Mensile d’Israel, 1952), 130. Davanzati’s thought exercised an important influence on the writings of later Italian economic writers, such as Geminiano Montanari’s (1633–87) *Della moneta, trattato mercantile* and *Breve trattato del valore delle monete in tutti gli stati*, in *Scrittori classici Italiani di economia politica*, 9–285 and 287–371, respectively; reprinted separately as *Della moneta, trattato mercantile* (Rome: Bizarri, 1965) and *Breve trattato del valore delle monete in tutti gli stati* (Rome: Bizarri, 1965).

<sup>46</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 101–2; *Discorso*, fols. 88v–89r. For further discussion, see Giuseppe Veltri, “‘Identity of Essentiality of the Jewish People’: The Diaspora and the Political Theories of Simone Luzzatto in the Jewish Thought of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Civiltà del mediterraneo* 12 (2013): 149–78, esp. 153–57; Giuseppe Veltri, “Von Nutzen und Nachteil der jüdischen Existenz in der Diaspora: Streiflichter auf Simone Luzzatto,” in *Judentum und Christentum zwischen Konfrontation und Faszination: Ansätze zu einer neuen Beschreibung der jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen*, ed. Wolfram Kinzig and Cornelia Kück (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2002), 97–115, also published as “Von Nutzen und Nachteil der jüdischen Existenz

Luzzatto maintains that exile and dispersion have rendered the Jews not only obedient to their rulers but also impervious to changes in their religious doctrines and rites.<sup>47</sup> A similar argument occurs in Baruch Spinoza's (1632–77) *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (*Theological-Political Treatise*): the continued existence of the Jews for such a long period of time despite dispersion and the lack of a state is not surprising, given that they have separated themselves from other nations to such an extent that they incur the hatred of other nations and as such they have survived.<sup>48</sup> Luzzatto also notes that the Jews, more than any other nation, have been trained “in the school” of discomfort under the rigorous discipline of necessity. For they do not own any land and are not entitled to exercise the mechanical crafts or any other urban profession. Furthermore, since their religion forbids celibacy, they are dedicated to raising a family and must work with diligence for their sustenance.<sup>49</sup>

Luzzatto echoes Botero's idea that although a city can seek to procure all the means and meet all the conditions conducive to steady growth, it cannot grow *ad infinitum*:<sup>50</sup> the growth of a city usually ends and its greatness and power dissipate and evanesce as soon as the city can be conveniently and easily conserved. Greatness that emanates from and depends on remote causes or strenuous effort is bound to be ephemeral, since everyone will seek his own comfort and ease.<sup>51</sup> The growth of cities results partly from the generative power (*virtù generativa*) of human beings and partly from the power and ability of cities to sustain their populations. Of these two parameters, the generative power has remained immutable for at least the past three thousand years, since human beings in Botero's time are capable of reproducing as they were in the time of Moses or David. Therefore, they would have been propagating and multiplying without limit and cities would have been growing incessantly unless there were certain hindrances. Botero infers from this that demographic stagnation is the corollary of a shortage or lack of food and of the means of subsistence;<sup>52</sup> and that humankind, after reaching a certain size, has not increased further because the fruits of the earth and the supply of food would not suffice for a larger population on a global scale.<sup>53</sup>

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in der Diaspora: Streiflichter auf Simone Luzzatto und den Mythos von Venedig,” in *Städte und Monumente: Ringsvorlesung des Orientwissenschaftlichen Zentrums*, ed. Orientwissenschaftliches Zentrum (Halle/Saale: Orientwiss. Zentrum der Martin-Luther-Univ. Halle-Wittenberg, 2003), 91–111.

<sup>47</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 103; *Discorso*, fol. 89v.

<sup>48</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel, trans. Michael Silverthorne and Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 55. For a more detailed comparison of Luzzatto's and Spinoza's ideas, see Bernard Septimus, “Biblical Religion and Political Rationality in Simone Luzzatto, Maimonides and Spinoza,” in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 399–433; Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, 182–84; as well as Giuseppe Veltri, “La dimensione politico-filosofica dei *caeremonialia hebraeorum*: Baruk Spinoza e Simone Luzzatto,” *Materia Giudaica* 13 (2008): 81–90.

<sup>49</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 21; *Discorso*, fols. 18v–19r.

<sup>50</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 400; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (72).

<sup>51</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 403; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (74–75).

<sup>52</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 401–2; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (73).

<sup>53</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 403; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (75).



Botero addresses the general causes of economic decline: a city's provisions are acquired from its own territory or from abroad, and if it seeks to expand, it needs to import additional food supplies. In order to secure imports from faraway places, it needs to possess a strong power of attraction (*virtù attrattiva*), which can surmount various obstacles, such as adverse geographical conditions, various threats associated with navigation, the resentment and rancor of neighbors and potential competitors, the length of time needed for the transportation of goods, shortages and the specific needs of the places from which the commodities originate, and all other factors that intensify and multiply as long as the city's population and needs increase. At some point, these obstacles, adversities, and challenges intensify to such an extent that they defeat all human effort, industriousness, and determination, for merchants cannot guarantee that the harvest will always be bountiful, that the various nations will always be at peace, or that the trade routes will always be open and secure; nor are they always able to ensure that the carriers, in the process of transporting supplies from faraway lands, will survive fatigue and cover their expenses. In the face of one of these difficulties, let alone several together, the population of the city is very likely to abandon it; a shortage of food supplies, famine, war, the interruption of trade activities, or a merchant's bankruptcy will force the people to migrate or seek refuge in another city or country.<sup>54</sup>

In the context of his discussion of the reasons why some cities, after having attained a certain degree of power and greatness, do not develop further but remain static or regress, recede, and deteriorate, Botero invokes the examples of Venice and Milan, whose populations have not grown for the past four hundred years, as well as that of Rome. Originally, when founded by Romulus, Rome could mobilize 3,300 soldiers. During the 37 years of Romulus's rule, the size of the army rose to 47,000 troops. Later, 150 years after Romulus's death, under Servius Tullius, the military consisted of 80,000 men, a number that gradually rose to 450,000 but then remained the same and did not increase further.<sup>55</sup> When Rome reached the zenith of its power, its population was able to procreate at the same pace as in the early stages of the city's history, but its nutritive power (*virtù nutritiva*, i.e., its power to sustain its population) did not increase. Over the course of time, because provisions were insufficient, either the residents refrained from marrying and raising families, or if they did, hardship or penury and the lack of provisions compelled the children to seek their fortunes outside their homeland.<sup>56</sup>

In his treatment of political and economic decline, Luzzatto follows Botero's account but subtly shifts the focus to the decline of mercantile activities and dispenses with a discussion of the impact of demographic factors. He specifically points out that, as is the case with the human

<sup>54</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 401–3; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (73–74).

<sup>55</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 400–401; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (72–73). For an earlier discussion of the affinities between Luzzatto's and Botero's economic ideas, see Riccardo Bachi, "La dottrina sulla dinamica delle città secondo Giovanni Botero e secondo Simone Luzzatto," *Atti dell'Accademia dei Lincei: Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, ser. 8, 1 (1946): 369–78 (reprinted in *Discorso*); and Bachi, *Israele disperso e ricostruito*, 95–139.

<sup>56</sup> *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 403; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, III.2 (75). An early modern English translation of book III of Botero's *On the Causes*, which deals with population increase, was produced by Thomas Hawkins (1575–1640?) in 1635: Anonymous, "Giovanni Botero on the Forces Governing Population Growth," *Population and Development Review* 11 (1985): 335–40. Botero also wrote a short tract on the population of the city of Rome in which he calculates that at the peak of its greatness Rome had around two million inhabitants. See *Della ragion di stato e Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 407–9; *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, 78–80.

body, great cities and nations start small and evolve in an almost imperceptible manner and through continuous nutrition to considerable greatness. But after having reached a certain point in their growth prescribed by nature, they cease growing and expanding, and for a certain period they stagnate.<sup>57</sup> As a result, a city, after having reached a limit in terms of its population and wealth, puts an end to its growth process and stalls or begins to decline. The reason for this is that as soon as its citizens and residents have secured a certain amount of wealth through trade, they turn away from their previous activities and focus solely on consolidating and conserving their possessions. Subsequently, foreigners, who are still animated by the same desire for tranquillity and repose, take over trade activities, and after having generated enough profit, they transfer their assets to their homelands, and the same occurs with all the other foreigners who have similar skills and succeed them. In this way, wealth constantly leaks out of the city without being replenished. Just as a sea, into which all rivers flow, retains the same amount of water without any increase and channels it imperceptibly back to the sources of the rivers, the influx of foreigners from various regions does not change or enrich cities, because the wealth acquired is eventually transferred, because of the continuous reflux, to the places from which those foreigners come.<sup>58</sup>

Having established the significance of trade for the existence of a flourishing state and a healthy and solid economy, Luzzatto proceeds to dissect the causes of the pathology of the Venetian economy and the decline of trade. Although trade is a commendable activity in itself, useful for those practicing it and a source of profit for the city where it takes place, it is associated with many challenges and perils. Thus, every merchant plans on retiring, after having accumulated a sufficient amount of wealth, and aspires to enjoy it in peace and tranquillity and invests in land acquisition and sources of income that are not subjected to the fluctuations of fortune. He operates in this manner not only for his own sake but much more on behalf of his children and successors: driven by the concern that they might not be equally skilled or experienced and might squander the capital that he has generated through persistence and hard work, he places restrictions on his possessions in order to dissuade or hinder his children from engaging in trade. Concomitantly, in cities, which become great and powerful thanks to the commercial activities of their own citizens, as soon as there is a shift of focus to the purchase of land, the construction of luxurious buildings, the acquisition of expensive furnishings, and urban occupations, trade passes into the hands of foreigners who come to the city because they are compelled by the adverse living conditions in their own countries, or are enticed by the desire for profit.<sup>59</sup>

Something similar occurred, in Luzzatto's view, in Venice. When the city, after having evolved into the most celebrated trading hub (emporium) of the entire world owing to the trade activities of its citizens, successfully extended its dominion into the Terraferma, those courageous and indefatigable merchants thought very wisely that it was time to be relieved from the troubles and perils of long and dangerous trips and expeditions. They decided to focus their

<sup>57</sup> For further discussion of Luzzatto's *Geschichtsphilosophie*, see Melamed, "Perception of Jewish History in Italian Jewish Thought," 146–53, 160; and Martin Kohn, "Jewish Historiography and Jewish Self-Understanding in the Period of Renaissance and Reformation" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1978), 144–86. Compare Justus Lipsius's (1547–1606) idea that cities, republics, and kingdoms are as mortal as those who create them; they come into being, evolve, flourish, and eventually perish, and as such they are akin to human beings with a life cycle of birth, adolescence, old age, and death. See *Justus Lipsius' "Concerning Constancy,"* ed. and trans. Robert V. Young (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011), 70–71.

<sup>58</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 14–15; *Discorso*, fols. 12v–13r.

<sup>59</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 11–12; *Discorso*, fol. 10r–v.

energy on the purchase and cultivation of land and other occupations related to civil life. As the Venetians retreated from commercial activities, foreigners from various countries gradually took over. As a consequence, almost all the trade and navigation in the West came under the control of the Genoese, the French, the English, the Flemings, and others. While Venice granted some foreigners permission to engage in trade in the West, only Venetian citizens or those who had been granted special privileges were allowed to trade in the Levant (East). Thus, trade that took place in the region between the Dalmatian Coast and Constantinople fell into the hands of Turks or their Greek subjects.<sup>60</sup>

In order to illustrate the role and contribution of the Jews to a vigorous economy, Luzzatto invokes the analogy between the state and a physical organism in a way reminiscent of William Harvey's (1578–1657) theory about the existence of a unified circulatory system within the human body, as expounded in his *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* (*Anatomical Exercises on the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*, 1628).<sup>61</sup> Luzzatto contends that in every place in which they live, the Jews are a portion of the blood or money (*damim*) that nourishes the body politic. For they are not allowed to wield or exercise political authority nor do they aspire to serve as ministers or officeholders, and always work for the benefit of the ruler.<sup>62</sup>

Luzzatto argues that the most important of the advantages associated with the presence of Jews in Venice is the profit deriving from the exercise of trade activities. For Luzzatto, commerce is the source of five principal benefits for the Serenissima: (1) the increase in the duties and tariffs imposed on imports and exports; (2) the transportation of various kinds of goods from faraway countries, which are intended not only to provide basic material wants but also to adorn civil life; (3) the abundant supply of materials, such as wool, silk, and cotton, which in turn enhances the employment of the local workers and craftsmen, keeps them content and tranquil, and helps avert domestic disturbances and dissension that can result from the shortage of supplies; (4) the sale of a large amount of merchandise produced in Venice, which is the source of income for a large segment of the population; and (5) the promotion of commerce and reciprocal trade, which are the pillars of peace among neighboring states, since most of the time it is the rulers who are moved by the inclination of their constituencies to engage in warfare and not the other way around.<sup>63</sup>

Luzzatto argues that the Jews never manage to accumulate such an extraordinary amount of wealth that could cause harm to others. In addition to not being allowed to acquire land, they

<sup>60</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 12–13; *Discorso*, fols. 10v–11v.

<sup>61</sup> William Harvey, "Movement of the Heart and Blood in Animals: An Anatomical Essay," in William Harvey, *The Circulation of the Blood and Other Writings*, trans. Kenneth J. Franklin (London: J. M. Dent, 1993), 1–87.

<sup>62</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 30–31; *Discorso*, fol. 27r–v. For further discussion of Luzzatto's use of the analogy between body and state, see Abraham Melamed, "The Organic Theory of the State in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought," in *Ideal Constitutions in the Renaissance*, ed. Heinrich C. Kuhn and Diana Stanciu (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2009), 117–50, esp. 145–50, reprinted in Melamed, *Wisdom's Little Sister*, 140–74; and Jonathan Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Ideology and Emancipation in Europe, 1638–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23. For representations of the Jewish body in early modern Jewish writing, consider Maria Diemling and Giuseppe Veltri, eds., *The Jewish Body: Corporeality, Society, and Identity in the Renaissance and Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Luzzatto's deployment of the organic metaphor in the context of his advocacy of Jewish commerce can be construed as a response to earlier depictions of Jewish lending activities as eroding the body politic, similar to gangrene in the physical organism. On this, see Kenneth Stow, "Jews and Christians—Two Different Cultures?," in *"Interstizi": Culture ebraico-cristiana a Venezia e nei suoi domini dal Medioevo all'età moderna*, ed. Uwe Israel et al. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010), 31–46, esp. 35–37.

<sup>63</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 10; *Discorso*, fols. 8v–9r.

tend to marry within their own community and to raise large families, which generates large expenses and necessitates the division of their possessions. Moreover, children of wealthy families usually become less industrious since they lack the stimulus of necessity and are spoiled by luxury and comfort. Due to the imposition of regular and special taxes, within a very short period of time, like a flash of lightning, their possessions and wealth vanish. As such, their assets are always mobile and never fixed or permanent. Over the period of one hundred years, there have never been any Jews who were wealthy and left the city, nor has any moderate amount of wealth ever been preserved beyond the second generation. Just as the sea usually washes light objects up onto the shores and retains the solid and heavy ones, in a similar manner the city rejects those who are despondent and destroyed and welcomes and embraces the wealthy ones.<sup>64</sup>

Last but not least, the Jews do not have their own country to which they can transfer possessions and assets that they accumulate in Venice, and there is no place in which they have the right to acquire landed property. And even if they had such a right, exercising it would not be conducive to their interests, since they would be unable to pawn their possessions. They also need safe conduct and licenses issued by rulers in order to live in a specific place, and they have little interest in offices, titles, and power. Once they have been admitted to a certain place with benignity, they are firmly resolved to stay. Moreover, commerce changes in every place, and pursuing it successfully requires long experience and an extensive network of contacts and partners. The Jews are aware of the fact that in time of war they are the first to be subjected to the extortion of allied soldiers, to plundering by enemy forces, and to the levies imposed by rulers. Therefore, they are utterly content with the pace of trade activities in Venice and with the abundance of all the things that are necessary for human sustenance. The common people are friendly to them, and the state administers justice in an exemplary manner and protects them against anyone attempting to threaten their lives or tamper with their property. It also observes in a precise manner all the privileges that have been promised to them and are mentioned in their charters.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The preceding discussion of the affinities between Modena's, Luzzatto's, and Botero's political ideas can help us ascertain to what extent Jewish political discourse on exile, greatness, and decline prefigures some of the developments that incubated Michel Foucault's conception of modern "governmentality" (*gouvernementalité*). Using the transition from "people" to "population" as a frame of reference, I seek to assess whether the conceptual categories introduced by Foucault in his project tracing the origins and trajectories of governmentality might be applicable or relevant to the study of Jewish political thinking.

Foucault draws the distinction between the concept of "population," which is construed as a quasi-biological entity subject to governmental practices or statistics, and that of the "people," which is defined as a political entity that embodies specific virtues and qualities and is characterized by the observance of certain laws.<sup>66</sup> Modena's treatment of the political and military organization of ancient Israel operates on the concept of the "people" and the image of ancient Israel as an independent political entity or group, unified by its own system of laws and values.

<sup>64</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 29–30; *Discorso*, fol. 26r–v.

<sup>65</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 17–18; *Discorso*, fols. 15v–16r.

<sup>66</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, trans. from the French by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 42–44, 104–6.

Luzzatto's thinking, on the other hand, is characterized by the interplay of the idea deriving from the earlier tradition (Philo, Josephus, etc.) that the Jews constitute a "people" or "nation" within the framework of a broader political organization, and as such they are perceived to have and follow their own rules, rites, etc., and the notion, strongly reminiscent of Botero's usage of the term "population," that they form part of a larger population or civic body and perform a distinct economic function, especially in the context of Venetian trade, without necessarily claiming to constitute a separate political unit.

Luzzatto's ideas can be construed as the corollary of what Foucault characterizes as a reconceptualization of population as a variable that is contingent on multiple factors, some of which are not natural but artificially modifiable, such as the tax system, circulation, and the distribution of profit. They foreshadow the notion that is so central to mercantilist theories that population does not simply amount to the aggregate of the inhabitants of a given territory/state or the number of individuals who make up the workforce. Luzzatto evinces a subtle understanding of the correlation between wealth and population and their various aspects and manifestations, such as taxation, scarcity, depopulation, idleness, begging, and vagrancy. These aspects, in turn, led to the emergence of political economy, which is the corollary of the insight that the relationship between the population and available resources can no longer be regulated through the existence of a coercive system aimed at fostering population growth by augmenting resources.<sup>67</sup>

Modena's and Luzzatto's accounts of the features of a great and vigorous polity are premised on the vision of the state as the ensemble of what Foucault calls established institutions and given realities. As such, they can be explained as the outgrowth of the endeavor to determine, dissect, and analyze the nature, operation, dynamics, and (inter-)relations of the constituent elements of the state conceived of as an institutional whole (the sovereign, the various magistrates, the territory, the inhabitants, the wealth of the ruler, etc.) that pervades writings on *raison d'état* (governmental reason/*ratio status*)<sup>68</sup> and anti-Machiavellian literature during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>69</sup> Their ideas can be seen in the broader context of the emergence of political economy and a series of developments whereby money, price, value, circulation, and the market came, according to Foucault, to be perceived and assessed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as integral aspects of a comprehensive and rigorous arrangement that serves as the foundation for the analysis of wealth and the outgrowth of speculation on money, trade, and exchange, all of which are associated with a set of governmental practices and institutions.<sup>70</sup>

As indicated earlier, Luzzatto tunes down the eschatological dimension of decline, thus sharing the reason-of-state theorists' concern to carve out space for governmental action without any reference to a natural order, the fundamental laws of nature, or a divine order.<sup>71</sup> Luzzatto embraces an approach to the art of government that is coterminous with rationality in the means involved in

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 365–66. For a recent reappraisal of Foucault's contribution to the history of economic thought, see Klaus Hamberger, "On Applying Foucauldian Methods to the History of Economic Thought," in *Is There Progress in Economics? Knowledge, Truth and the History of Economic Thought*, ed. Stephan Boehm et al. (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2002), 45–64.

<sup>68</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 239–48, 286–94. See moreover Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, trans. from the French by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1–25.

<sup>69</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 89–101.

<sup>70</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [trans. unidentified] (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 182.

<sup>71</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 257.



the exercise of government rather than the laws, a specific constitution, or the personal attributes, virtues, and qualities of the sovereign or of the various magistrates.<sup>72</sup> In this sense, Luzzatto's mercantilist plea for concrete measures intended to reinvigorate the Venetian state echoes the reason-of-state authors' emphasis on the need for the ruler to garner detailed knowledge about the constituent elements of the state and thereby gain insight into the factors that preserve its strength and independence. Luzzatto's approach to the parameters of good leadership and the features of stable and lasting political organization is imbued with one of the core ideas of governmentality: the sovereign's knowledge is predicated on access to and possession of technical data concerning the forces and resources that characterize the state, including knowledge about the population, the various groupings that compose it and their wealth, its natural resources, such as mines and forests, the wealth in circulation, the balance of trade, and the effects of taxes and duties.<sup>73</sup> Like Botero, Luzzatto adduces statistical evidence to buttress his theoretical arguments and positions and articulates the importance of demographics, as evidenced, for instance, by his calculations of the number of Jews residing in Venice, the revenue deriving from taxes on their mercantile activities,<sup>74</sup> and the size of the Jewish communities in various countries, including the Safavid and Ottoman Empires, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, and the kingdoms of Morocco and Fez, and major European urban trading centers (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Hamburg).<sup>75</sup>

Luzzatto de-emphasizes the importance of territorial expansion as one of the determinants of a great polity and espouses one of the central tenets of reason-of-state literature: one of the fundamental tasks of government is to guarantee the integrity, consolidation, and reconstitution of the state in the face of events and emergencies that can erode its strength.<sup>76</sup> Luzzatto's advocacy of Jewish economic utility speaks to the preoccupation of the proponents of the doctrine of reason-of-state that the aim of government is to maintain the state and identify the necessary and sufficient means, tools, and governmental and administrative practices and techniques that allow the state to exist and perpetuate itself.<sup>77</sup> Albeit not oblivious to the influence of the factors that inevitably lead to political and economic decline, Luzzatto stresses, in common with Botero, the need for the ruler to come to grips with and mitigate the impact of the forces that, after propelling the state to the peak of history, lead to its degeneration and destruction by causing it to fall into a cycle of birth, growth, acme, and decay that great empires of the past, such as the Babylonian Empire, the Roman Empire, and Charlemagne's kingdom, experienced.<sup>78</sup>

Luzzatto's approach to the function and status of the Jews as the equivalent of blood in the body politic is colored by early modern debates about the flow of blood *qua* flow of capital, which, as Foucault argues, are premised on the notion that the primary function of government is not to demarcate the realm of the state but to facilitate, regulate, and monitor circulation, distinguish the good from the bad, and guarantee that things are in continuous movement, while mitigating or eradicating the effects of the challenges and dangers intrinsic to the process of circulation.<sup>79</sup> Luzzatto's deployment of the organic metaphor in his discussion of the role of Jews in Venetian

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 273–74.

<sup>74</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 31–33; *Discorso*, fols. 28r–29v.

<sup>75</sup> Simone Luzzatto: *Scritti politici e filosofici di un ebreo scettico*, 101–6; *Discorso*, fols. 88v–92r.

<sup>76</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 287.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 257–58.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 288–89.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 65.

trade presages mercantilist endeavors that, as pointed out by Foucault, locate money and wealth in the process of exchange and circulation, reframe the analysis of wealth in terms of William Harvey's theory about blood circulation, and liken the function of coinage in society to that of blood in the physical organism. According to Foucault, these ideas found their systematic expression in Thomas Hobbes's (1588–1679) notion that the venous circulation of money is that of duties and taxes upon all merchandise transported, purchased, and sold. Like Luzzatto, Hobbes transposes Harvey's insights to political theory and suggests that silver and gold are channeled to the heart of the Man-Leviathan (i.e., to the public treasury), and subsequently the state can melt it down and redistribute it. The state's authority alone can ensure the vitality of bullion, determine its value, give it currency, redistribute it among private individuals in the form of salaries, pensions, or remuneration for supplies purchased by the state, and, ultimately, stimulate its circulation and the exchange of wealth, manufactures, and agricultural products. This process resembles the one in the human organism, in which the veins receive the blood from the parts and organs of the body, and carry it to the heart, which, once the blood has been made vital, pumps it through the arteries so it can enliven and facilitate the motion of its various members.<sup>80</sup>

Luzzatto's advocacy of the role of Jewish trade reflects his belief in the importance of the circulation of capital for a healthy economy and can be linked to attempts to reconfigure the connection between wealth and money and the idea, as noted by Foucault, that wealth is no longer contingent on the value of metals but depends on the circulation, exchange, and distribution of goods. As long as commodities circulate, they multiply, thus leading to the growth of wealth; and when the amount of coinage increases due to good circulation and a favorable balance, it is possible to attract new merchandise and thereby enhance agricultural activities and manufacturing.<sup>81</sup>

As a crucial transitional figure at the dawn of modernity, Luzzatto drew on the ideas put forth by earlier Jewish writers and paved the way for subsequent debates (Spinoza, Moses Mendelssohn) on the role of European Jewry in political and economic developments.<sup>82</sup> But there is an additional aspect to Luzzatto's political and economic thinking that renders it acutely relevant to ongoing debates on the economic aspects of state decline, social and religious diversity, and how the modern state can come to grips with cultural and religious differences in an era of increasing globalization: one of the major themes informing Luzzatto's program for uplifting the Venetian economy and improving Jewish-Christian relations is the ability to co-opt and integrate foreigners and aliens into an existing social structure and its importance for a sound political and social organization. Luzzatto intersects here with Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who, in his essay "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," asserts that states destined to evolve into great empires take a liberal stance toward the naturalization of foreigners. The ancient Romans,

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 194; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck, rev. student ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 175. For further discussion, see also Robert Appelbaum, "Flowing or Pumping? The Blood of the Body Politic in Burton, Harvey, and Hobbes," in *The Cultural Politics of Blood, 1500–1900*, ed. Kimberley Anne Coles et al. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 171–90; and Germano Maifreda, *From Oikonomia to Political Economy: Constructing Economic Knowledge from the Renaissance to the Scientific Revolution*, trans. Loretta Valtz Manucci (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 202–5. On the origins of early modern ideas on circulation, consult S. Todd Lowry, "The Archaeology of the Circulation Concept in Economic Theory," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1974): 429–44.

<sup>81</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 194.

<sup>82</sup> See, in general, Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce*; Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

for instance, were unrivaled in human history in their ability to receive and integrate foreigners, they established the greatest monarchy of the world, and they were propelled to global hegemony by generously granting the rights of citizenship, suffrage, and office-holding not only to certain individuals but also to entire families, cities, and, on certain occasions, even entire nations.<sup>83</sup> Luzzatto's meditation on Venice's declining fortunes foreshadows current discussions on the causes of social and financial disarray: the shift from trade activities to the purchase of land; complacency, nonchalance, or fear of exploring the unknown and addressing challenges; and the long-term effects associated with a society's loss of vigor and vitality. Luzzatto's ideas point to an enduring and tantalizing dilemma confronting the modern state: either fall into a cycle of decay and dissolution or capitalize on and harness the strengths of the various segments of the body politic by identifying ways in which differences can be turned from a source of friction into a force for shaping a prosperous and peaceful future. [A]

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<sup>83</sup> For a discussion of other affinities between Luzzatto's and Bacon's political ideas, see Giuseppe Veltri, "Economic and Social Arguments and the Doctrine of *Antiperistasis* in Simone Luzzatto's Political Thought: Venetian Reverberations of Francis Bacon's Philosophy?" *Frühneuzeit-Info* 23 (2011): 23–32.